

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: October 26, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie. Also present was Board of Health Chairman Charles Ogden.

Others present via zoom: Will Conklin, Sandra Martin, Mary McGurn, Eileen Vining, Doug Mishkin, Robert Faulkner, Peg McDonough, Juliette Haas, John Morgan, Jennifer Brown.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the October 12, October 15 and October 19 ARPA session were approved with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

Robert Faulkner and John Morgan of CHA Companies, the engineer retained for the design work on the Mount Washington Road reconstruction project, explained that when the 25% design was submitted MassDOT asked for additional meetings that will require engineering that was not budgeted for. CHA is asking the Board to approve an additional \$22,750 in expenditures for the completion of the 25% design. The reason for the extra work is that the road is in a very environmentally sensitive area and is totally within or abutting several wetlands areas and waterways. The utility work was so large that MassDOT is asking that it be split into two phases: roadway and bridge. This is really a reallocation of funds due to a change in the framework as this work would normally be done as a part of the 75% design. The Board authorized the reallocation of the funds by a vote of 2 in favor, Vermeulen abstaining. Authorized to date is \$1,070,000. There is \$421,741 in the account so no additional funds are actually needed at this time.

Will Conklin reported that the Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) Committee has done a lot of work. The planning grant was awarded which it to be used to plan the planning. The action grant will come after the planning. Currently the committee is in an information gathering mode to determine what is needed to be prepared for effects of climate change. As a part of this process, a grant has been applied for to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the town. A survey is being developed, outreach meetings will be held as well as public input sessions. Will reported that the relationship with Weston & Sampson is excellent. The open law requirements were discussed in relation to subcommittee's formed by the MVP committee. Will promised to send the Board a time line of the entire planning process.

NEW BUSINESS:

The board voted unanimously to appoint Melanie Torrico as the delegate to the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) and Michael Harrigan as the alternate delegate to replace Bruce Bernstein.

The review of the Housing Feasibility Study was postponed to the next meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to sell the surplus Tractor/Mower to the highest bidder, Thomas Gage, for \$2579. Five bids were received ranging from \$500 to \$2579.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board voted unanimously to post the vacancy on the School Committee.

GRANTS:

The Board stressed that the grant best practices policy was not discretionary or ambiguous. Town Department's applying for grants without the Board's approval and signature leaves the town vulnerable and possibly liable.

Sandra Martin, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission employee, explained the Retail Program Standards grant that Egremont has been the lead town for through Board of Health Director Juliette Haas for about 8 years. These funds go to the Berkshire Health Alliance and have paid for such things as grants to the towns for on-line permitting programs and training. There is no fiscal, or other, obligation to Egremont as there is an intermunicipal agreement between the agencies. Moving forward the Chairman of the Selectboard will sign off on all such grant programs.

Sandra Martin asked the Board to endorse a 3-year Food & Drug Administration grant for the Berkshire Health Alliance, again to help fund programs that they conduct for their member town's. The Board endorsed this application.

At 11:04am the Board interrupted their business to call to order a hearing at the request of National Grid to place three new poles to service a new residence on Blunt Road. Steve Hayward was present representing National Grid. There were no abutters present. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request as submitted. Hearing closed at 11:06am.

Sandra Martin proposed the Town apply for a Community Inclusion Plan grant in the amount of \$10,000 to assess safe access to Prospect Lake. This grant is to help those with mobility issues, all those regardless of age, seniors and others, and will look at options to get safe access to the lake for exercise such as swimming. The Board voted unanimously to support this grant application that is supported by the Council on Aging, Friends of Prospect Lake and Ad-Lib.

The Planning Board will update the Board on the Master Plan update process at the Board's next regular meeting.

The Conservation Commission will update the Board on the Open Space & Recreation Plan update at the Board's next regular meeting.

ARPA Administrator Peg McDonough reported on a successful ARPA session though the turn out was very low. She has plan to speak with the Police Chief regarding needs he may have in the near future. Peg reported that Berkshire Bounty has decided not to apply for the food storage grant during this round.

French Park Committee Chair Jennifer Brown reported that one of the two quotes to write a Forest Management Plan for French Park was over the grant award amount. The quote that is viable is from Jim Kelly, who wrote the town's Forest Management Plan for the Jug End Road property. This will be a 10 year plan which will include invasive plant management as a priority, as well as trail quality and maintenance.

COVID:

Local organizations are now offering clinics for adults to get their COVID booster vaccine. Schools are gearing up for when the vaccine is approved for children.

FOLLOW UPS/UPDATES:

The Water Department did not get back to the Board with either an RFP for engineering or an estimate. ARPA Administrator Peg McDonough is trying to identify 4 or 5 areas they can use ARPA funds for.

The Board endorsed the low income subsidy document drafted by Fiber Connect and the Technology Team. This document may be distributed as a tax bill stuffer in late December.

There has been no information from either Fiber Connect or the Commonwealth on the status of the pole locations for Brookvale and Hilltop Roads.

The Greenagers have verbally agreed to maintain the plantings in the median at the intersection of Route 23/41. The Town would like the plants to be pollinator friendly. The Town will ask if a spigot could be installed in the area to facilitate watering. MassDOT has officially asked Mass Historical Commission to sign off on the project as a low impact. James Barnack has notified the Town that he is leaving Jacobs Engineering. The Board agreed to issue a letter of thanks to James.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Board next regular meeting will be November 9 at 10am. The All-Boards meeting is November 2 and the Web Page redesign meeting is November 4 at 1:30pm.

Adjournment 11:57am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/oct26

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.